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## School cuts target 29-year-old program

By Gus Thomson, Journal Staff Writer



Ben Furtado/Auburn Journal

Susan Burton, who attends classes and social events with the Auburn-based Community Resource Education program for developmentally disabled adults, tends to a horse during an activity at a rural Auburn farm.

to that district or finding another location away from Auburn, possibly in Loomis.

The program had been receiving average daily attendance funding from the state to help pay for teachers and staffing. Because of the special needs of participants, the student-staff ratio is 1 to 5, Lile said.

Evening programs include gardening, horsemanship and art. Weekends provide an opportunity for participants to get out of the house for a variety of activities. This month, the list includes watching live harness racing at Cal Expo, a pizza-movie night, picnic, River Cats baseball game in Sacramento, bowling and a barbecue. Students pay food and admission prices during activities.

"I would be bored at home," said Susan Burton, a developmentally disabled woman in her 40s.

Burton said she'd particularly miss activities like Christmas parties, dances and a ranch-work class if the program shut down.

Kathy Liegerot, an activity aide, said she realizes state and local schools cuts have been hard for everyone – noting that Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's mother-in-law started the Special Olympics in 1968.

One of the reasons for the cutbacks has been the renewed emphasis on outcome-based vocational training. But Liegerot said she sees that in program participants – just in different ways, particularly with many who hold down jobs.

After the voters' rejection of five ballot measures that could have raised taxes and fees, Schwarzenegger proposed \$1.6 billion more in education funding reductions this school year and \$4.16 billion more for the fiscal year starting July 1. That's in addition to \$11.6 billion schools and colleges were cut in February's budget deal.

Eric Vereyken, Placer School for Adults assistant principal, said that has translated into budget reductions that have forced administrators to make recommendations on closures based on the financial problems the state is experiencing.

Lile said many developmentally disabled Community Resource Education participants aren't able to fathom the possibilities after June 30 and she's working hard to find a solution to keep moving ahead after that date with a program that has real value.

After their years in the school system have finished, the reality hits developmentally disabled adults and their care givers that they're still at home, Lile said. That's when parents come to the program, realizing their son or daughter needs a social life.

"I feel a real responsibility for these people," Lile said. "A lot I've known for, gosh, 30 years, and we have new ones all the time. This has all been real devastating."

The Journal's Gus Thomson can be reached at [gust@goldcountrymedia.com](mailto:gust@goldcountrymedia.com) or comment at [AuburnJournal.com](http://AuburnJournal.com).

### Keywords

Placer School for Adults, Community Resource Education Program, Jennifer Lile, Susan Burton, Kathy Liegerot, budget, cuts

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On 6/8/09 at 05:47 AM, [loomisresident](#) wrote:

Proposition 1A would not have increased taxes, that has already taken place, it would have lengthened the time the taxes would be in effect. In essence it would not have had any effect until the present tax increases expired.

Reality and the state of the Country mandates that all these worthwhile program be kept alive by the efforts of relatives and volunteers. This is not a time to rely on Government to do much more than to keep the Country from plunging deeper into a financial abyss.

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On 6/8/09 at 06:47 AM, [BirchBricker](#) wrote:

What all other men are is of the greatest importance to me. However independent I may imagine myself to be, however far removed I may appear from mundane considerations by my social status, I am enslaved to the misery of the meanest member of society. The outcast is my daily menace. Whether I am Pope, Czar, Emperor, or even Prime

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